

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 AGR-20 SWF-02 EB-11 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4034

UNFO RUSBQD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 2369

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DACCA 3763

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFMN, NEAID, PK, BG

SUBJ: PAKISTAN RELIEF OFFER DOWNPLAYED IN DACCA

REF: ISLAMABAD 8060

SUMMARY: DACCA PRESS REPORTED PAKISTAN RICE AND COTTON YARN CONTRIBUTION IN PERFUNCTORY ONE-SENTENCE PARAGRAPH WITH NO GOVERNMENT COMMENT. COINCIDENTALLY, ANNOUNCEMENT COMES IN MIDST OF HEAVILY ORCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN BY MUJIB AND PRESS CASTIGATING PAKISTAN FOR PAST CRIMES OF COMMISSION AND OMISSION IN EAST BENGAL AND FOR ITS FAILURE TO SHARE ASSETS IN BANGLADESH IN THE PRESENT HOUR OF NEED. ENTIRE THEME OF CAMPAIGN IS HARD LINE WITH NO HINT OF BENGALIEE CONCILIATION TO MOVE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS OFF DEAD CENTER. END SUMMARY.

1. IN TERSE FASHION, DACCA PRESS REPORTED PAKISTANI RICE AND COTTON YARN CONTRIBUTION THUS: "PAKISTAN HAS OFFERED 5,500 TONS OF RICE AND 890 TONS OF COTTON YARN FOR FLOOD VICTIMS OF BANGLADESH, IT IS LEARNT YESTERDAY, REPORTS BSS." THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENT.

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2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT COMES COINCIDENTALLY IN THE MIDST OF AN ANTI-PAKISTAN CAMPAIGN, CLEARLY ORCHESTRATED BY THE BDG, WHICH CASTIGATES PAKISTAN FOR PAST CRIMES OF COMMISSION AND OMISSION IN EAST BENGAL AND FOR ITS FAILURE TO SHARE ASSETS WITH BANGLADESH NOW. ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN ARE (1) MUJIB'S HARSH ATTACK ON PAKISTAN'S PAST NEGLECT OF FLOOD CONTROL IN AUGUST 18 SPEECH (Dacca 3710); (2) MUJIB'S INTERVIEW WITH FOREIGN NEWSMEN, HEADLINED IN Dacca AUGUST 20, IN WHICH HE ACCUSED PAKISTAN OF LEAVING BANGLADESH BANKRUPT AND OF NOW BEING RELUCTANT TO SHARE ASSETS; (3) FRONT PAGE PRESS TREATMENT OF AUGUST 21 OF PURPORTED CONFESSION OF GENERAL NIAZI TO THE HAMOODUR RAHMAN COMMISSION ADMITTING THAT THE PAK ARMY DELIBERATELY KILLED 1.5 MILLION BENGALIS IN 1971; (4) A SPATE OF EDITORIALS AUGUST 21 DEMANDING THAT PAKISTAN SHARE ASSETS; AND (5) EDITORIALS AUGUST 22 ELABORATING ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NIAZI'S ADMISSION OF PAK ATROCITIES.

3. COMMENT: IN THE ATTACK ON PAKISTAN, MUJIB AND THE PRESS ARE RESTATING LONG-HELD ATTITUDES: PAKISTAN FIRST NEGLECTED AND THEN RAVAGED BANGLADESH; MUJIB IN HIS MAGNANIMITY FORGAVE THE PAKISTANIS BUT THEY HAVE NOT RECIPROCATED HIS GENEROSITY. ONLY A PROMPT SHARING OF ASSETS WILL PROVE PAKISTAN'S GOOD FAITH. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT BDG WILL CONSIDER THE RICE AND COTTON DONATION AN ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTE FOR AGREEING TO SHARE ASSETS. INDEED, BDG'S PERFUNCTORY REPORTING OF THE DONATION SUGGESTS THAT IT IS SUSPICIOUS OF BHUTTO'S MOTIVES AND UNWILLING TO GIVE ANY RESPONSE THAT COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A CONCESSION ON OTHER ISSUES.

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